

Sustainability Policy

Policy No:	GOV- 014
Council Resolution Ref:	
Date Adopted:	31 October 2023
Review Date:	31 October 2027
Version No:	1
Responsible Officer:	Director Economic Development

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote sustainable practices in all areas of Council operations to prepare for consequences linked to climatic changes and to ensure a better quality of life for its residents and visitors to the Shire

Commencement of Policy

This Policy will commence on adoption by Council. It replaces all other policies (whether written or not). Council may amend this policy by resolution.

Application

This policy applies to employees of Murweh Shire Council. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

Our Vision

Murweh Shire Council has a vision to be the first certified Sustainable Outback Destination in south west Queensland. The Shire will lead by example, through its vision and actions, for a sustainable future for Outback Queensland communities. The Shire strives to achieve sustainability in line with its vision to be recognised as an Australian and international sustainable, place to live and as an iconic tourism destination.

Murweh Shire Council is committed to working to promote sustainable practices in all areas of its operation to ensure a better quality of life for its residents, and a quality, authentic and memorable experience for visitors to the Shire.

This is an ongoing integrated and continuous process, which requires dynamic action and the adaptation of innovating techniques and methods, to align the fundamental concepts of responsible sustainable operations and tourism to benefit the Shires diverse landscapes, and the social and cultural dynamics of the community.

Objective

To embed the application of Principles of Sustainability into Council's decision making and activities in a manner where environmental, community, economic, social, and governance responsibilities are equally considered as part of decision making and activities, to meet the needs of the present and create a foundation for future generations to meet their own needs.

Scope

This is a whole-of-Council Policy that requires Council and its employees to consider Principles of Sustainability in their decisions and activities across all areas of Council business.

By adopting a coordinated approach, Council will foster sustainable practices, focused on local issues in the Shire, to achieve Environmental, Cultural, Social and Economic outcomes and benefits for the community in line with the Corporate Plan (2022-2027).

Commitment to the Shire and its People

Murweh Shire Council is committed to working towards a sustainable future for the residents of the Shire, its unique environmental, cultural, economic change and social settings. The Sustainable Development 2030 Agenda “recognizes that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health, education, inequality, and spur economic growth – while also tackling climate change and working to preserve our environment” (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 2015, (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>)).

Council undertakes to achieve as many of the 17 Goals of Sustainable Development, as possible, and applicable in the local context.

Murweh Shire Council is committed to applying the Principles of Sustainability to all its decision making.

Specifically, Council will meet this commitment by considering the Principles of Sustainability:

- In the development of strategic documents.
- In managing social and economic resources.
- In the management and conservation of freshwater resources, environment, and cultural heritage.
- In land use, planning and development, and ecosystem management.
- To facilitate responsible energy, water and waste management which seeks to maximise efficiencies and minimise non-renewable resource use, with long-term strategies to address future needs.
- To encourage the protection of significant ecosystems and biodiversity.
- To encourage environmental awareness and the use of environmentally friendly products.
- To provide equal employment opportunities, including employment of locally based workers.
- By encouraging, training, and supporting staff in the adoption of sustainable principles and practices to achieve sustainable behaviour in the workplace.
- To achieve local sustainability through consultation, leadership, and guidance with the community, and to provide education and learning opportunities for the local community.
- To communicate with Shire stakeholders about Councils sustainable initiatives thus encouraging more Shire households to become sustainable in their daily actions.
- To set realistic targets for improving sustainable actions for the future of the Shire and its people.

Our sustainability policy connects us to the numerous sustainability efforts around the world. Although sustainability contains elements that apply everywhere, we customise our approach to our region and circumstances.

The Murweh Shire Destination Authority

Murweh Shire covers an area of 40,774.5 square km, with a population of 4,010 (2021 Census) based in three main population centres at Charleville (3300), Augathella (328) and Morven (184) with a small satellite community at Cooladdi plus outlying farming properties.

Murweh Shire is located in southwest Queensland approximately 743 km from the major city of Brisbane. The Shire is a remote, sparsely populated region, which is classified as one of the hottest and driest bioregions in Queensland. Its climate is harsh and can be classified as semi-arid to arid with limited surface water and temperatures reaching the mid to high forties in summer with warm winter days and cold nights. Socially and economically, four ABS measures identifying the Shire as “most disadvantaged ranking the Murweh Shire in the first and second Quintiles for Economic Resources (IER), Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD), Education and Occupation (IEO) and Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD)”.

The Shire is predominantly a rural area, particularly sheep, cattle, and grain, with a growing tourism market contributing significantly to the economy of the area since the demise of agriculture over the past few decades.



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The area is bisected by the Warrego River, located in the top north-west of the Murray–Darling Basin, which flows 900km from its source in the Carnarvon Range into NSW and the Murray Darling. The region is underlain by shallow alluvial and sandstone aquifers, with the deeper confined aquifers of the Great Artesian Basin beneath the catchment. The Great Artesian aquifers supply the bulk of groundwater used in the region and supply the three towns in the Shire with all their water. The red desert sands of the region can be seen throughout the region.

The major channels of the waterways support cypress pine woodland and gidgee can be found within the catchment floodplain areas. This Shire forms part of the Mulga Lands bioregion characterised by flat to undulating plains with strips of low hills and located in the northern part of the Murray-Darling Basin in NSW (26%) and southwest Queensland (74%). (Ref: <https://www.environment.gov.au/bioregion-mulga-lands>). In addition, the rare Ooline trees are only found in the Tregole National Park, and large red river gums are found along the Warrego River.

A number of threatened species live in these the Mulga lands bioregion including: 9 plant species; 5 mammal species; 7 bird species; and 2 reptile species. Charleville is the Bilby capital of Australia, and assists the Save the Bilby Fund (<https://www.savethebilbyfund.org.au>) with a breeding program for reintroduction of this threatened species back into Currawinya National Park.

The Shire has a rich cultural landscape from its original Anglo-Saxon heritage of exploration, aviators, the US Airforce, and the Bidjara First Nations Peoples.

These diverse environmental, and cultural features and the social settings of small communities are attracting larger visitor numbers each year, from April to late October. Specifically related to the increasing tourism demand in the Shire, the Destination Authority will commit to tourism growth, which is managed for its impact, and fully responsible in its approach to the environment, social needs and to cultural sensitivities (APEC PATA Code for Sustainable Tourism 2001), while allowing visitors to have an authentic experience of the region.

Audit and Review

This policy shall be reviewed every **three years** or as required due to changes to in legislation.

Version Control

Version No.	Date	Approved	Amendment
1.0	10/11/2023	John Nicholson	

Signed:

Dated: 31st October 2024

Printed Name: Bruce Scott OAM

Position: Chief Executive Officer

Audit and Review

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This policy shall be reviewed every ***three years*** or as required due to changes to in legislation.

Definitions

[insert definitions]

Example

"**Public Sector Ethics**" means the ethics principles as defined in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*.

References

[insert legislation, guideline or statutory instrument]

Example

- *Local Government Act 2009*

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Version Control

Version No.	Date	Approved	Amendment
1.0	dd/mm/yyyy	[officer name]	[brief description]

Approval

Chief Executive Officer		Neil Polglase	
Date:	dd/mm/yyyy	Signature:	